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Monday, March 26, 2007



THE HONOURABLE NOËL A. KINSELLA
SPEAKER

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THE SENATE

Monday, March 26, 2007

The Senate met at 6 p.m., the Speaker in the chair.

Prayers.

[Translation]

SENATOR'S STATEMENT

QUEBEC ELECTION

Hon. Marcel Prud'homme: Honourable senators, I am very disappointed that reasonable accommodation was not made to enable us to be in our ridings this evening to mourn the defeat or celebrate the victory of our compatriots in Quebec. In any case, I already voted for the Action démocratique du Québec in a riding where the PQ is most likely to win.

[English]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

STUDY ON NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

INTERIM REPORT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENCE COMMITTEE TABLED

Hon. Colin Kenny: Honourable senators, I have the honour to table, in both official languages, the tenth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Security and Defence, an interim report entitled *Canadian Security Guide Book 2007—Border Crossings: An Update of Security Problems in Search of Solutions*.

On motion of Senator Kenny, report placed on the Orders of the Day for consideration at the next sitting of the Senate.

• (1805)

[Translation]

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 4, 2006-07

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-49, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2007.

Bill read first time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

On motion of Senator Comeau, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

[English]

APPROPRIATION BILL NO. 1, 2007-08

FIRST READING

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that a message had been received from the House of Commons with Bill C-50, for granting to Her Majesty certain sums of money for the federal public administration for the financial year ending March 31, 2008.

Bill read first time.

The Hon. the Speaker: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the second time?

On motion of Senator Comeau, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 57(1)(f), bill placed on the Orders of the Day for second reading at the next sitting of the Senate.

• (1810)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THE ESTIMATES, 2007-08

INTERIM REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON MAIN ESTIMATES— DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the thirteenth report (first interim) of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, (2007-08 Estimates), presented in the Senate on March 22, 2007.

Hon. Joseph A. Day: Honourable senators will have the thirteenth report, which was circulated earlier, that deals with the first interim supply for the fiscal year beginning April 1, 2007, to the end of June of 2007.

Honourable senators, this interim supply is based on the Main Estimates for the fiscal year 2007-08, parts I and II, which have been circulated to honourable senators. Your committee has had the opportunity to begin the study of these estimates. With the mandate given by the Senate, the committee has the authority and the obligation to study these Main Estimates for this fiscal year coming throughout the year, and later this evening I will give a final report on the fiscal year ending March 31.

This is the beginning of the study of these Main Estimates for the coming year. I would like to give you some background so that you will have an understanding of what you are being asked to vote for.

The voted authorities are those for which the government must ask Parliament's approval annually under the Appropriation Act. Appropriation Bill C-50 was tabled earlier this evening, and we will begin dealing with it tomorrow. It is our practice to study the material that comes under the Appropriation Act before it arrives here because things move so quickly. Once the appropriation bills arrive, they can be compared to the pre-study. That, in fact, is what we have done. We will confirm the information that is in these Main Estimates with the schedules that are attached to Bill C-50, which we have just received. Then I will speak on Bill C-50 in due course and confirm its content.

Once approved, the vote wording and the approval amounts become the governing conditions under which the expenditures may be made by the government. It is important for honourable senators to understand, however, that it does not commit the government to spending the entire amount that appears in the Main Estimates. They cannot, however, spend more than the amount that appears in the Main Estimates or in the appropriation bill that flows from the Main Estimates, without filing supplementary estimates, in the form of Supplementary Estimates (A) and Supplementary Estimates (B). Typically, we would see those bills later during the fiscal year, sometime in June, with another supply bill for the balance of the year based on the Main Estimates. Keep in mind that we are dealing with interim supply at this stage, and our first report, and then a Supplementary Estimates (A) probably in October or November, if that is deemed to be appropriate by the government, and a Supplementary Estimates (B) late in the fiscal year to pick up any of those items that could not have been dealt with in detail in the Main Estimates.

The President of the Treasury Board, Mr. Toews, appeared before the committee. He outlined the government plan for the coming fiscal year, which honourable senators will see in our report.

One area of concern to honourable senators was the growth in spending in this fiscal year. We have prided ourselves for over ten years now in not going into deficit. It is important for honourable senators to listen to the government's plans with respect to expenditures.

These particular Main Estimates project an increase of \$12 billion or 6 per cent year-over-year. That is the Main Estimates of last year versus the Main Estimates of this year. The Treasury Board President agreed that there are, however, a number of new spending proposals in the March 2007 budget totalling some \$4.4 billion that will be reflected in supplementary estimates. So we have a \$12 billion increase, plus the budget, which is not reflected in these estimates. There will be additional expenditures of approximately \$4.4 billion as a result of new programs announced in the budget. That is a forecasted increase in excess of \$16 billion, honourable senators. We will want to keep a close watch on that as the supplementary estimates come before us.

The committee has been interested for some time in the government's progress towards implementing full accrual accounting, as recommended by the Auditor General, and as

recommended by your committee. The difficulty is that the budget is presented in an accrual basis of accounting. The cash based appropriations that we have requested with certain budget initiatives, when converted to cash from accrual, will be larger than they appear on an accrual basis. To that extent more funding might be requested.

Honourable senators, it is difficult for your committee to follow the differences between accrual-based projections by the government and cash-based appropriation bills and Main Estimates. This cannot continue because we cannot compare year-over-year increases in expenditure in a meaningful way. Upon hearing an announcement by the government, we must now ask the government official, is that a cash-based or an accrual-based announcement? We saw that last year. Otherwise, we are not able to determine what in fact is being promised when an announcement is made.

We had great difficulty with respect to the announcements by the previous government and the current government on National Defence programs that were being introduced.

Honourable senators, we will keep an eye on that for you as we go through the year. There were other issues that we wanted to talk about, and we raised with the minister, including the ecoTrust initiative. We were interested in learning about that initiative and the progress made in implementing expenditure reduction initiatives. As I indicated, your committee will continue to study these particular matters as we progress.

What I typically like to do at the beginning of the fiscal year is look at the entry for Parliament. That is always an interesting area as we compare the Senate to the House of Commons.

The Senate's program expenditures for fiscal 2006-07 Main Estimates was \$53 million. The Main Estimates for this fiscal year show an increase to \$56 million. That is an increase of \$2.3 or \$2.4 million, Main Estimates over Main Estimates. The increase for the House of Commons is \$7.3 million. If you look at the number of senators versus the number of the members of the House of Commons, it is approximately three to one. If you take the \$2.3 million increase for the Senate, you would expect to see about \$6.9 million for the House of Commons. In fact, it is \$7.3 million.

• (1820)

We will keep an eye on these increases as we go along, but often, honourable senators, we are given a percentage increase. Percentage increases year over year are not helpful when we compare \$400 million to run the House of Commons and \$84 million to run the Senate. It is important to look at the precise figures and the real amounts rather than percentages to determine how well we are doing in comparison to the House of Commons in providing public services.

At this stage, I ask honourable senators to consider adopting this first report from the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, which will provide the basis for the supply bill, Bill C-50, which has been introduced.

Hon. Lowell Murray: Honourable senators, I do not want to disappoint my friend, the chairman of the committee, but I prefer not to adopt the report. I prefer to leave the motion on the Order Paper so that we can have a wide-ranging debate on matters I will refer to in a moment.

As my friend and other honourable senators know, it is not necessary to adopt the report to proceed with the appropriation bill that is related to it.

I notice that nobody has put down a notice of motion or a notice of inquiry that would give us the latitude for a general discussion of budgetary policy in a more coherent and organized way than is possible during the oral Question Period. I say that with great respect to those who have been asking the questions and those who have been answering them. If we want to discuss the budgetary policy of the government, there should be the occasion for a proper debate on it.

Either of the appropriation bills would probably provide the latitude that is necessary. However, we must be realistic. Those appropriation bills usually carry time constraints that are on the government — and, indeed on Parliament. The committee report, however, is in a different category altogether. We can leave that motion on the Order Paper and take the occasion of that debate for a more general discussion of the budgetary policy of the government.

Therefore, unless there is some grave procedural or other objection, I propose to move the adjournment of this debate.

The Hon. the Speaker: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

On motion of Senator Murray, debate adjourned.

THE ESTIMATES, 2006-07

REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES (B) ADOPTED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the eleventh report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (Supplementary Estimates (B), 2006-07), presented in the Senate on March 21, 2007.

Hon. Joseph A. Day moved the adoption of this report.

He said: We are dealing, honourable senators, with the eleventh report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance, dealing with the report on Supplementary Estimates (B).

As I indicated earlier, the typical flow of the fiscal year is, first, Main Estimates; we deal with an interim supply and then full supply based on the Main Estimates. Then typically, to implement the initiatives during the year, such as the budget, we have Supplementary Estimates (A) and Supplementary Estimates (B). We dealt with Supplementary Estimates (A) in November, and Supplementary Estimates (B) take us to the end of the fiscal year. They deal with late initiatives by the government that were not reflected in earlier statutes or in earlier estimates.

Honourable senators will recall that we had a bit of a strange year last year because of the election. Interim supply ran not to the end of June, but went to the end of November. This year, we are back into a normal cycle with respect to the Supplementary Estimates (B) concluding the fiscal year.

Since we are concluding the year, I will be brief concerning the next report that I will deal with, because it ends off the fiscal year and does not ask for more spending. However, this particular report does ask for more spending.

It asks honourable senators to agree to the government spending \$424.5 million to end out this fiscal year. That spending is offset by certain savings of \$314 million that we had already approved through various statutes. Therefore, the net amount that the treasury will be charged will be \$110 million to end out this fiscal year.

Honourable senators, during the year, changes to the government's spending plan are now reflected in these estimates. Because of the election and the late change in the opportunity for the government to start implementing its policy decisions, we saw a number of new initiatives and a significant amount of savings on old initiatives, which we had earlier approved in the supplementary estimates.

The supplementary estimates serve the purpose that I have indicated. They may seek authority for revised spending levels — and there is some revised spending here — that Parliament is asked to approve in an appropriation bill such as the one here. Second, they provide Parliament with information on changes to the estimated expenditures to be made under the authority of statutes previously approved.

We see in the estimates statutory approvals. Honourable senators do not have to vote on that statutory approval again. It is there for their information so they can see the entire picture of the government. There are voted appropriations and then, in the estimates, there are statutory amounts. That is helpful; in fact, we have asked for them to appear there.

Budgetary spending and non-budgetary are terms that appear in the reports. Budgetary spending is everything we would think the government should seek approval for in relation to the servicing of public debt, operating and capital expenditures, payments to Crown corporations and that type of thing.

Non-budgetary spending is outflows of money that will occur and therefore change the fiscal position of the government, but it is in the form of advance payments, loans and transfers to other departments. It must be reflected because it makes an impact, but a lot of this spending will come back in the form of repayments to certain loans and that type of thing.

Honourable senators, we discussed a number of items at length during the visit from the President of the Treasury Board, one of them being the reliance on supplementary estimates. An interesting statistic became available to us. Between the fiscal years 1989-90 and 1996-97, years in which the government was in deficit, supplementary estimates made up an average of 4.5 per cent of the total estimates submitted to Parliament — that is, the Main Estimates plus the Supplementary Estimates (A) and Supplementary Estimates (B). The supplementary estimates were an increase of only 4.5 per cent over the Main Estimates. Between fiscal 1997-98 and 2005-06, in which there were surpluses, the percentage of the supplementary expenditures over the Main Estimates doubled to 10.4 per cent.

What does that tell us? Government is watching to see if they will have a surplus. If they have a surplus, they start thinking about how they can spend more money. I am not certain that is a good way for governments to operate. We explained to the President of the Treasury Board that we would watch that particular trend and, hopefully, it will not continue.

• (1830)

We also discussed the environment. We asked if the government would be reporting the results of all programs that had been cancelled. The president indicated that he is in discussion with the Minister of Finance regarding the establishment of a system that would determine how often programs are reviewed and the cost of such a system. We would then know what programs are being cancelled, and they will indicate which programs are being cancelled because they were found to be ineffective or inefficient. We also wanted to know the process of determining effectiveness and efficiency and we have been assured that we will be receiving more detail in that regard.

We asked questions with respect to gender-based analysis and how that is assessed when programs are looked at from the point of view of efficiency. The Canadian Biotechnology Strategy is a new program for which the government is requesting \$1.9 million through these Supplementary Estimates, and we wanted to know about that.

Senators noted that the Canada Revenue Agency is requesting \$30.7 million for the implementation of a reduction in GST for the budget year 2006-07.

Canada Learning Bond and Canada Education Savings Grant were intended for low and modest income families to help children go to university or college. Unfortunately, there was a significant reduction in the uptake on these particular programs, which we found troubling. The President of Treasury Board agreed, and there is an indication that the government will increase the promotion of these particular programs to see whether we can generate a greater uptake on the money that had been allocated but just not used and not applied for.

These estimates seek \$16 million for additional public security and anti-terrorism, and we questioned the additional \$16 million. Estimates should only contain requests for money if the initiative is new, or is an initiative that could not be determined in detail at the time of the Main Estimates. We were curious as to what type of additional public security and anti-terrorism initiatives required an additional \$16 million. In fact, senators noted that, in addition to the \$153 million requested for this purpose in Supplementary Estimates (A) and the \$16 million in Supplementary Estimates (B), since budget 2001 the government has announced incremental funding totalling \$12.5 billion towards public security and anti-terrorism initiatives. This is a major expenditure and it is very important that we follow these expenditures. It is equally important that we see the expenditures coming not through the Supplementary Estimates but in the Main Estimates so that they can be given a full airing.

In conclusion, honourable senators, I want you to be assured that we have been looking at a number of other items that are of interest to you, and we have received assurances from the

President of Treasury Board that he will follow up on a number of these issues and provide us with more detailed information.

We looked into other subject matters, namely the removal of geographic barriers for public service jobs, the ongoing cost of implementing and administering the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement, funding for the RCMP towards hiring additional staff and for the Department of Justice Canada towards hiring new federal prosecutors, the status of the \$200 million that was recently committed by the government towards reconstruction in Afghanistan, and progress on the appointment of the new public appointments commissioner, which has not happened yet. As I stated, the President of Treasury Board indicated that he would be looking into providing us with further information.

In conclusion, honourable senators, I will now go to the listing for Parliament one more time and point out to you that the Senate, in the Supplementary Estimates (A), did not ask for any supplementary allocation or appropriation. However, honourable senators, the House of Commons asks for \$1.56 million in Supplementary Estimates (B), under the leading "Program Expenditures."

Senator Mercer: Shame!

Senator Day: The interesting thing, honourable senators, is that when you look into it, that is \$1.56 million in addition to the previous figure for program expenditures in the House of Commons. I looked at the previous figure and I thought there was something missing because, in the Main Estimates, it was \$256 million and they are showing authorities to date of \$259 million, which means that the House of Commons was asking for over \$3 million on Supplementary Estimates (A) and \$1.5 million on Supplementary Estimates (B), whereas the Senate did not seek additional funds on either supplementary estimates. It is important for the Committee on Internal Economy to be aware of that fact when we are discussing the funds available for senators to perform their tasks.

Honourable senators, I would respectfully submit that this report of the committee on Supplementary Estimates (B) be adopted.

Hon. Terry M. Mercer: Honourable senators, I was hoping that the Honourable Senator Day would take a question or two.

Senator Day: Thank you. I would be pleased to do so.

Senator Mercer: I want to clarify something. This is the second report that the honourable senator has spoken to this evening. I checked, and these reports were presented to the Senate on March 22 and March 21. Do we not need to have this bill passed by this Thursday? Is that correct?

Senator Day: I thank the Honourable Senator Mercer for that question. The reports can be compared to a pre-study. They are not exactly the same but they can be compared to that.

We have Bill C-49, which is a supply bill of appropriations that are reflective of the Main Estimates, for Supplementary Estimates (B). What we are dealing with at this time, and what I have just spoken on, is the report of your committee that

studied Supplementary Estimates (B). We gave a report on that. Supplementary Estimates (B) has two schedules, and those two schedules are part of what we have studied. Those schedules will be attached to Bill C-49, which we received today.

Debate will begin on Bill C-49 tomorrow. It is up to this chamber to determine what they would like to do with respect to that bill. It is our custom not to refer the supply bill to the Senate committee because we have already studied the schedules that are attached to it. Bill C-49 is at first reading tonight, and it will have second and third reading later this week or next week.

Senator Mercer: I am correct, then, that it is Bill C-49 that we received today and we are expected to pass it by Thursday?

Senator Day: That is not what is before you at the present time, Senator Mercer.

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Honourable senators, I am sorry, but Senator Day's time has expired. Is the honourable senator asking for more time?

Senator Day: I wish to finish answering Senator Mercer's question. That would be helpful.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

Senator Mercer: I am curious because each year that I have been here, as I have observed the proceedings of this chamber, it has been the complaint of many honourable senators that we receive this bill, or bills similar to this bill, every year from the House of Commons today, or on a day like today, and it is expected that we will pass it by the end of the month, which, in the parliamentary calendar, is Thursday, because we do not sit on Friday.

• (1840)

It seems to me that Canada's new government would do something new. They would be much more efficient down there than previous governments. I want to clarify that it is the same inefficiency from the House of Commons that we have seen before, and the pressure is now on the Senate to comply with this legislative deadline. Is that correct, Senator Day?

Senator Cools: Tell us. Come on, all learned senators, tell us.

Senator Day: The honourable senator refers to the bill that we will begin to debate tomorrow. I do not disagree. We have made that point many times with this government and the previous government that the time frame for the presentation of supply bills is too tight. We cannot deal with them until they have dealt with them and sent them here.

The process that is used in the House of Commons is not the process that we use. They go through the readings in the House of Commons in half an hour or 15 minutes. That is not the process we follow in the Senate.

I agree with the honourable senator. He might want to make that point tomorrow when we deal with the bill.

[Senator Day]

Senator Mercer: Canada's new government?

The Hon. the Speaker pro tempore: Is it your pleasure, honourable senators, to adopt the motion?

Motion agreed to and report adopted.

THE ESTIMATES, 2006-07

FINAL REPORT OF NATIONAL FINANCE COMMITTEE ON MAIN ESTIMATES—DEBATE ADJOURNED

The Senate proceeded to consideration of the twelfth report of the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance (2006-07 Estimates), presented in the Senate on March 21, 2007.

Hon. Joseph A. Day moved the adoption of the report.

He said: Honourable senators, this is the final matter on which I will speak this evening. It deals with the close-out of fiscal year 2006-07.

The first point I make regarding this particular close-out of this fiscal year is with regard to Laura Danagher, who has been with the Treasury Board secretariat for several years and has been helpful to us — “us” being the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance — in finding our way around these documents and in trying to implement changes that make these documents more user friendly for us. In her appearance before us early last week, Ms. Danagher announced that it would be her last as she has received a promotion and is moving to another area within government. The Treasury Board Secretariat and the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance will miss her expertise and guidance. We wish her well as she undertakes her new responsibilities.

Honourable senators, this twelfth report is the final report for this fiscal year. Honourable senators gave us a mandate to study, throughout the year, the estimates of this year ending March 31. It is our custom to end the year with a final report and report back to you. The report is not extensive. I have referred to a number of points that are ongoing and will continue to be of interest and concern to us.

With respect to the work that honourable senators gave the committee during the year, we dealt with the first interim report in May 2006. We reported on the Supplementary Estimates (A) in November; we reported on Supplementary Estimates (B) earlier this evening; and, we now give you the final report.

One other item of investigation under the Main Estimates was provisions to safeguard the independence of the judiciary and the determination of judicial compensation and benefits. We filed that report in November 2006. Since the appointment of the judiciary continues to be of interest to parliamentarians, honourable senators may wish to refer to that objective report that your committee prepared for you.

Honourable senators, items of continuing interest are horizontal information displays. When the government spends money in many different departments, how do we know what the total cost is? That is called “horizontal displays,” going through

various departments. We continue to be interested in that information. It is not the way we would like to see it yet. It appears in the Supplementary Estimates, but it does not appear in all the estimates. We would like to see that and we have spoken to Treasury Board about that issue.

For example, if honourable senators want to know the total cost to the Canadian purse of the evacuation of Canadians from Lebanon, they must go to six or seven different departments in estimates, Main Estimates and supplementary estimates. We want the Treasury Board to display that so that we can know how much it cost by looking at a table: how much to Immigration, Foreign Affairs, National Defence and the various other departments that might be involved. That information is horizontal information display, which we will continue to work on.

Expenditure restraints are next. The minister, in his statement to us, said that the government had identified \$1 billion in savings, but only \$223 million was reported to us. There is still \$776 million in savings that the government has not been able to demonstrate to us as to where they are. They say the savings have been made and identified, but they are not able to tell us where. We continue to pursue that, and we have asked for clarification on that point.

We would like to know what the total cost is with respect to the Vancouver Olympics. It is unfortunate that we have a history of seeing this kind of initiative become a runaway expense, and we continue to watch that on behalf of honourable senators.

Regarding national defence accrual budgeting, I mentioned to you earlier that accrual budgeting versus cash is an unacceptable situation. It must be resolved. We have a private member's bill calling for the government to provide financial statements on an accrual basis. We bring the government in, and it says it would be a tremendous amount of work. The Auditor General has said do it, the House of Commons has said do it and, honourable senators, we need to be stronger in our statements. If we are halfway there, which we have been for the last six or seven years, we must finish it. We cannot continue to be halfway between the two systems.

An Hon. Senator: Good for you.

Senator Day: Honourable senators, those are the highlights of our work for this year.

I would like to thank all honourable senators who serve on the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance. It is an extremely important committee. Your Senate looks at expenditures before they occur, as opposed to a lot of the work that is done in the other place where they look at public accounts a year and a half after expenditures occur. We need to continue to work in this area of estimates and where the government hopes to go.

I respectfully request the adoption of this report.

Hon. Tommy Banks: Honourable senators, some things that the Honourable Senator Day has said have given rise to some questions. Will he entertain a question?

Senator Day: I will be pleased to.

Senator Banks: Can the honourable senator give us a thumbnail of the rationale for the switch to accrual accounting, which, I gather, is desirable?

Can he then tell us whether he has confidence, based on what he has heard from the government, that the other shoe will, in fact, drop within our lifetime, so that estimates might also be made on the basis of accrual accounting so that we can compare apples and apples? Otherwise, as the honourable senator has said, we do not know what we are talking about.

Senator Corbin: We do not know where the money is.

• (1850)

Senator Day: I thank Senator Banks for his questions.

The rationale for the accrual system is that it provides managers with a better tool to understand the assets they have under management. Say, for example, a truck is purchased. The life of that vehicle appears in the financial statements each year, and it is done on an amortized basis so that you can do your planning and see when you are getting down to the end of the life of that vehicle with capital cost depreciation. The manager will have in his mind what he or she is managing and what must be replaced down the line. If you proceed on a cash basis, you show the year that you pay for the item and then you forget about it.

The Auditor General and most accounting institutes will say that the accrual basis is a much better tool for managers. We have been moving towards letting the managers in the public service manage. Let the deputy minister manage that department and then hold him or her accountable. We have given the deputy minister the tools to manage, and then we can say: "Why have you not done that? Why were you not thinking in terms of replacing that truck down the line when you knew it was coming to the end of its life?"

That is a thumbnail sketch of the rationale. It is much more complicated than that. Sadly, I am not an accountant or I could give you a much more thorough explanation.

The decision to move to the accrual basis, for the reasons that I have explained, was made about 10 years ago. We need the political will that drives the civil service to implement this system. They have been proceeding slowly because it is easier to continue to do what you have always done, and progress seems to be much slower than is absolutely necessary. It is not, in my view, a major cost factor; rather, it is a mentality.

The House of Commons committees have shown the same frustration that our committee has shown. The other place has a report that should be dealt with soon, I understand, asking the government to set a time frame for the implementation of across-the-board accrual.

On motion of Senator Nancy Ruth, debate adjourned.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Do you agree, honourable senators?

BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

Hon. Gerald J. Comeau (Deputy Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, if Her Honour were to ask the question, she would find that it is agreed that all remaining items on the Order Paper and Notice Paper be allowed to stand in their place.

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

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